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Western caucus panel focuses on property rights

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WASHINGTON - In the wake of a U.S. Supreme Court ruling on the use of eminent domain, the Congressional Western Caucus has established a Property Rights Task Force charged with "enhancing protection of private property rights."

Rep. Chris Cannon, R-Utah, the head of the Western Caucus, will serve on the task force, which also was formed to "draw attention to this critical issue."

The Supreme Court ruled June 23 that local governments may condemn property to enhance economic development, expanding the use of eminent domain, which usually is used to take land for public good such as roads.

"Recent court decisions have highlighted the danger facing our property rights," Cannon said in a statement. "Congress needs to focus its attention on protecting the fundamental right to own property."

-Thomas Burr